

## **Booking Travel**

- Non-Stop Flight- Earlier in the Day
- Speak with an airline representative over the phone and specify exactly what you need.
  - Request attendant service: assistance to get to/from the gate and through TSA
  - Reserve a wheelchair or guide service if needed
  - Request assistance with boarding / need for an aisle chair
  - Identify needs for special seating: aisle seat, close to door, with a moveable arm rest
- Ask about reduced fares for a companion or caregiver and insurance coverage for lost or damaged medical equipment
- Call to confirm reservations and requests at least 48 hours prior to departure.
  - Mention your need for additional time to get through the airport
  - Verify boarding bridge versus outside boarding
  - If traveling with a service dog, inform the airline
- Check with Airline and/or Airport website for full accessibility information.

## **Traveling with a Wheelchair**

- Know the dimensions and weight of your wheelchair
- If traveling with a power wheelchair or scooter, know the type of battery
  - Dry cell/gel can stay attached to the chair if approved, confirm with reservation agent
  - Wet cell must be boxed up separately in a special airtight container
- Ask how your equipment is going to get on the plane and where it is going to be stowed
- Electric wheelchairs must be stored upright so that batteries don't need to be removed
  - Still attach directions for removing the batteries, assembling, and operating the chair
- Prepare a wheelchair handout with the following information:
  - How to lock/unlock the wheelchair to enable manual pushing / operate the chair
  - Type of battery and how to remove the battery if needed
  - What parts are being removed
  - If the wheelchair can be folded down and put into tilt or reclined position
  - Include your cell number and state that they are to call this number before making any changes to the chair
- To help prevent damage, remove seat cushions or any other loose items and store in a carry-on bag. Make sure that your name and address are on all pieces of equipment.
- Stay in your wheelchair until you're at your gate and the airplane door is open for boarding

## **Service Animals**

- Documentation and 48-hour notice may be required
- Have the service animal wear an identifying vest or harness
- Bring health certificates and proof of vaccination
- Check international requirements if traveling overseas

## **Oxygen:**

- Provide instructions and medical approval at the time of check in. Refer to airline website for specific policies and details
- Portable O2 Concentrator (POC)
  - You are allowed to use your own airline approved Oxygen concentrator
  - May be required to bring batteries that will last 150% of the estimated flight time
- Compressed Oxygen Tank
  - You can use your own tank supply while at the airport but must change to the airline's tank when boarding. Personal tanks must be emptied before stowing on plane
  - Schedule for a full tank upon arrival at your destination

***Pace yourself – Plan for Breaks – Be mindful of your travel distance and endurance***

## **At the Airport:**

- Check In (suggested 2-3 hours before flight)

- Confirm all special service requests
- Obtain proper gate tags for all items including your wheelchair
- Security (TSA) – TSA Cares Program
  - Use Restricted Access Line. Can remain in wheelchair and request to keep shoes on
  - Anything you need for medical reasons you can have, just must specify the reason why
  - If you don't feel comfortable with something or there are concerns about your medical equipment, ask to speak with a supervisor
- Boarding / On the Plane
  - Re-identify special service requests with gate agent and flight attendants
  - Confirm your equipment has been loaded
- Prior to leaving the airport
  - Check to make sure you have all your equipment and it is not damaged
  - Prearrange ground transportation

### **Stowing Equipment:**

- Remove all moveable pieces prior to stowing (store in duffle bag with you)
- Use protective covering (such as plastic wrap) to help prevent damage
- Attach all proper gate tags and your instruction sheet for equipment handling

### **Packing – Carry On Luggage:**

- Picture Identification (government issued)
- Medications: label medications, physician and emergency contact number, health insurance
- Supplies: bladder management, etc
- Change of clothing
- Carry on bag for removeable wheelchair parts (cushion, footrests, joy sticks, neck support, etc)
- Attach ID tag to all carry on and stowed items
- Don't forget your wheelchair charger!

### **Sitting Tolerance / Seat Stability:**

- Place your wheelchair cushion on the airplane seat, may need support under feet to accommodate for the raised seat height from the cushion
- If air cushion is used, consider the changes in air pressure and release air during the trip
- Incorporate changing positions / Pressure relief techniques
- Place chair in slight recline for trunk support and use a chest strap or support if needed
- Use compression socks to help reduce swelling in legs

### **Toileting:**

- Complete bladder management before security and boarding the plane
- Consider using an external catheter during travel
- Blanket, Mountain Dew Bottle, Blanket, Urine bag- gel if needing to complete in your seat
- Some folks reduce food and liquid intake prior to flying
- Flight attendants will assist to/from the in-flight restroom via onboard aisle chair but will not assist with toileting

### **Airline or Equipment Issues:**

- Every airline is required to have a complaint resolution officer (CRO) on staff to help resolve any situations you may encounter. Notify CRO for any problems or inconveniences via Department of Transportation (DOT) hotline for airline travelers.
- DOT hotline - M-F 9am-5pm - 800.788.4838 (Voice) 800.455.9880 (TTY)
- Have access to a copy of the Air Carrier Access Act for reference

***These are just a few things to consider when planning air travel. Your trip can be a success if you are resourceful, assertive, and plan ahead!***